

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly

VOLUME 36 No. 1

2006

The Secrets of Glen Garage



DAVID ZSIZO

The above is an undated photograph of Sidney Butterfield standing outside the original Glen Garage. Lily Butterfield, his wife, took the photograph probably in the 1920s.

About the Author

David Zsido is an administrator at Central Vermont Public Service Corporation. He is also the author of "Antique Trucks," *Rutland Historical Society Quarterly* (Vol. 16 No. 4) and "The Early Years of Company C, 368th Engineer Battalion, U. S. Army Reserve In Rutland, Vermont," *Rutland Historical Society Quarterly* (Vol. 34 No. 2). He has been very active in the "Over the Hill Trucks" organization that preserves, restores and shares information on old trucks.

About Sidney Frank Butterfield

It's been nearly thirty-nine years since a fire gutted the house, which sits at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and North Main Street (US Rte 7) in Rutland. This was the homestead of Sidney F. and Lily Butterfield. Sidney was stricken with a coronary condition shortly after the time of the fire, and died two weeks thereafter on 20 June 1967. Lily moved to another house just south of this location. She lived there to the age of 105 and died in April of 2004.

Sidney Frank Butterfield was born on 28 April 1896. According to military records, he was inducted into the U.S. Army on 16 May 1918 at the age of 22 and was initially assigned to the Mechanized Detachment at the University of Vermont for a sixty-day period. Ultimately he was assigned to Company B 312th Ammunition Train until 7 February 1919, and served overseas from 24 August 1918 until 5 March 1919. He was discharged on 17 March 1919 at Camp Devens, Massachusetts. Following his return to Rutland, he joined Rutland Post 31 of the American Legion.

He was a man who dabbled in several different jobs. Although he operated Glen Garage from the 1920s through the 1940s, he also hauled everything from gravel to cattle and even the U.S. Mail. His trucking business was called "S.F. Butterfield Motor Express." On 4 January 1951 Central Vermont Public Service Corporation employed Sidney where he was assigned employee number 617.

Sidney was also a scoutmaster for a local Boy Scout troop during the 1950s (probably Troop #148). He retained several scout leader guides for different leadership topics. He also conducted a survey of the troop members, which asked more than twenty questions about their opinions of the troop's meeting location, meetings and activities.

The *Quarterly* is published by the Rutland Historical Society, 96 Center Street, Rutland VT 05701-4023. Co-editors: Jim Davidson and Jacob Sherman. Copies are \$2 each plus \$1 per order. Membership in the Society includes a subscription to the *Quarterly* and the *Newsletter*. Copyright © 2006 The Rutland Historical Society, Inc. ISSN 0748-24493.

The Secrets of Glen Garage

By David Zsido

Reflecting back to my younger days, I can always remember riding by the old burned out house at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Route 7 in Rutland. Although the house was extensively damaged, it was never demolished and still stands today. The property at this location also included two other separate buildings: one an old wooden frame garage (the original Glen Garage), and the other a large two story former barn, which later became the home of the Glen Garage. The fire did not harm these buildings. The second Glen Garage, in addition to storing a wide variety of old car and truck parts, also provided a roof and dry cover for two vehicles stored inside.

On the north wall of the second Glen Garage somewhat of a lean-to roof had been constructed and over the years the roof on the lean-to began sagging. Under the roof was a pair of headlights on which I always focused my attention. Judging from the quick glimpse I took every time my father drove past the location, I always figured they were on a car produced in the 1930s. Years later I would ultimately learn that the headlights were actually those of an old dump truck. By this time the roof had completely disintegrated and the outline of the truck had become apparent.



DAVID ZSIDO

On 4 December 1982 there is a closer view of Bob Giddings with the 1933 International B – 3 on the north side of the barn at Glen Garage.

Finally, in 1982, the mystery was solved. Bob Giddings had also noticed the truck over the years and needed a hand-cranked dump body for his 1924 Model TT Ford truck. I talked with Ben Butterfield, Sidney's son, about the possibility of purchasing the old truck, and a deal was reached. Bob and I met Ben at the location on 4 December 1982 with Bob's 1980 Chevrolet K-30. We had to move old vehicle axles, wheels, and an assortment of other vehicle parts to get to the truck. The truck turned out to be a 1933 Model B-3 International. While the dump body was in fairly decent shape, the cab had suffered from years of neglect and exposure to the harsh Vermont elements. It was believed that the Quirk Family Farm, just north of Glen Garage in Rutland Town, had originally owned the old International truck.

During the recovery of the old International, Ben Butterfield noted that he was extremely upset by the fact that vandals had 'trashed' the inside of the garage. Storage boxes of old newspapers, correspondence, and advertisements had been dumped and scattered about. Old vehicle parts, tools, and automotive memorabilia had also been tossed around. The biggest point of Ben's discontent and discouragement was the fact that someone had wrenched the steering wheel off the 1926 Studebaker roadster parked inside. In addition, the driver's side door window on the 1931 Reo Model 1B, parked next to the Studebaker had also been smashed. It was virtually impossible to set foot anywhere inside the garage without stepping on something. We offered to help Ben shore up



DAVID ZSIDO

*Another view of the Glen Garage on 27 February 2005
with the trees growing in front of the doors.*

the garage by nailing plywood over the windows and doors. He also affixed a stronger padlock to door.

The second Glen Garage remained mostly untouched for over twenty years from that time. Over the years of driving by it on almost a daily basis, I would watch the box elder trees grow larger and larger in front of the two sizeable-hinged garage doors. While I had expressed an interest in the Reo Truck to Ben, he and I couldn't come to terms on the price. Nonetheless, I kept a watchful eye on the garage, and from time to time would call Ben, if the wind or some trespasser had broken the door open.

Several months after the death of his mother, during the fall of 2004, Ben started selling off the contents of her house and some of the smaller items from the Glen Garage. Two auctions were scheduled. The first auction took place in late October in nearby Whitehall, NY. The second auction took place on November 24th at the same auction house. Between these two scheduled auctions, Ben, who had been briefly battling cancer, passed away on 11 November 2004. During the second sale, a handful of signs from the garage were sold. This included a couple of wooden painted signs that simply read "GARAGE". In addition, there were two, nearly mint, early porcelain Firestone Tire signs. While I didn't end up with any of the signs, I did manage to acquire several 1930s vintage metal toy trucks, which may have belonged to Ben.



DAVID ZSIDO

Fred Beauchamp holds a nearly mint porcelain Firestone Tires sign at the Glen Garage auction in Whitehall NY on 24 November 2004.

Just prior to Christmas of 2004, I spoke with Merrilynn Bougourd, one of Ben's daughters, and expressed my interest in the two vehicles, the automotive tools, and old vehicle parts. She quickly accommodated by offering to open the garage for an immediate inspection. Not much had changed over the twenty years since my first visit. The barn had held up well no doubt because there weren't many windows and the sturdy slate roof had kept snow and rain from damaging the wood and the contents inside. Therefore the floor had never started to decay or rot. This was vitally important as the two vehicles, parked side by side, were sitting on a wooden floor, which was some seven feet over the cellar area below. Nonetheless, it remained impossible to walk without stepping on the scattered paper goods, automotive parts, tires, and tools. It was frustrating to listen to the cracking of glass as we walked around, not knowing if the glass was from instruments, head or taillights, windshields or windows, or simply glass bottles.

There was an incredible amount of magazines, correspondence, letterheads, invoices, manuals, and other advertising material, which had also survived. Some of this printed material dated back to the 1880s. While some was badly soiled or torn, other pieces were perfectly intact. Unfortunately, there was also a significant amount of printed material which was not salvageable.

The short visit to the dark interior of Glen Garage was then followed up with a second visit on 27 February 2005. This time we were a little more prepared with flashlights and cameras. Although the visit was more thorough, especially on the second floor, it remained difficult to ascertain just what might be hidden due to the havoc, which had been caused by vandals twenty years earlier. However, the second floor did reveal some larger items from vehicles of the teens and twenties. This included a mixture of largely unidenti-



DAVID ZSIDO

A view of various old automotive parts on the south wall on the second floor of the Glen Garage on 13 March 2005.

fied headlights, bumpers, several complete windshield frames, a couple of old doors, and miscellaneous used engine parts. The narrow and steep stairway presented a challenge and required considerable effort when extracting anything from the second floor level. It became quite clear to me that anything salvaged from within the garage would require a tremendous amount of work. Moreover, perhaps the best way to undertake any reasonable salvage effort would be to literally clean and separate the scattered accumulation of what many would consider simply junk. The task would be easier said than done.

In addition to the used vehicle parts on the second level, there was also a vast collection of household items including chairs, bed frames, doors, windows, horse tack, and even a potbelly stove. Obviously, the vandals had created their havoc on the second floor as well because everything was scattered, thrown, and over-turned. It would take days to sort through, extract anything worth saving, and bag up anything that was simply trash. Much of the paperwork, which littered the main floor, consisted of old local newspapers from the late 1890s to about 1910. Unfortunately the bulk of the newsprint had been reduced to 3-inch by 4-inch chunks or smaller. However, several pieces of automotive literature and brochures escaped years of neglect with only minor damage. This included a small pamphlet on Oldsmobile Trucks and another on Auburn Automobiles. In addition, there was also a considerable array of old billheads, invoices, and business letterheads from the same era. Finally, there would still be the trees and standing brush in front of the garage with which to contend.

A closer examination of the two vehicles inside revealed a little more information as to how long they had been parked inside. The 1926 Studebaker's odometer read 31,978. While there wasn't a license plate on the roadster, the State of Vermont inspection tag on the windshield appeared to show a date of 1947. In addition to the missing steering wheel, someone had also removed the top of the carburetor float and the air cleaner. Moreover the windshield had been smashed as well. Obviously the tires were all flat, badly weather checked, and the rubber was rigid. It is not clear as to when Sidney had acquired this automobile but unquestionably it was prior to World War II.

The Reo Truck, on the other hand, still had a rear license plate affixed to it. This was partially obstructed by a large jack. The final year of registration was 1949. The large jack was apparently placed under the truck to keep some of the weight off the rear tires. The Reo's odometer listed 30,396 miles. Its dump body was filled to the top with crumpled chunks of paper, old coffee cans, a couple of wooden kegs, and a few wooden crates. Apparently, one of the last things

Sidney had done to the truck was to pull the spark plugs. Five of the six spark plugs were laid on the right side running board and the spark plug ports in the flathead six engine were open for more than forty years.

Around the 3rd of March, Merrilynn and I had come to an agreement on the purchase of the vehicles and old used vehicle parts and tools. Later more than three days of work followed. This involved partially cleaning the barn, sorting through the years of accumulation, disposing of non-salvageable items, hauling out salvageable vehicle parts and, of course, cutting the trees. Since the building was without electricity, a small portable generator was used to power droplights, but even flashlights had to be used in order to see. Ultimately nearly twenty large contractor style plastic trash bags were packed with non-salvageable paper, empty cans, pieces of hose and wire, and broken glass. These were placed into the adjacent old store for temporary storage.

Finally, on 19 March 2005 the first of the two vehicles, which had occupied the garage bays in Glen Garage for more than fifty-seven years, was ready to be pulled out into the daylight. We decided to pull the Studebaker out first, as we felt it would be the easiest to contend with despite the fact that the steering wheel was missing. Naturally, the accumulation of tree growth was also cut down early on the morning of the move. So the new owner of the old automobile, Doug



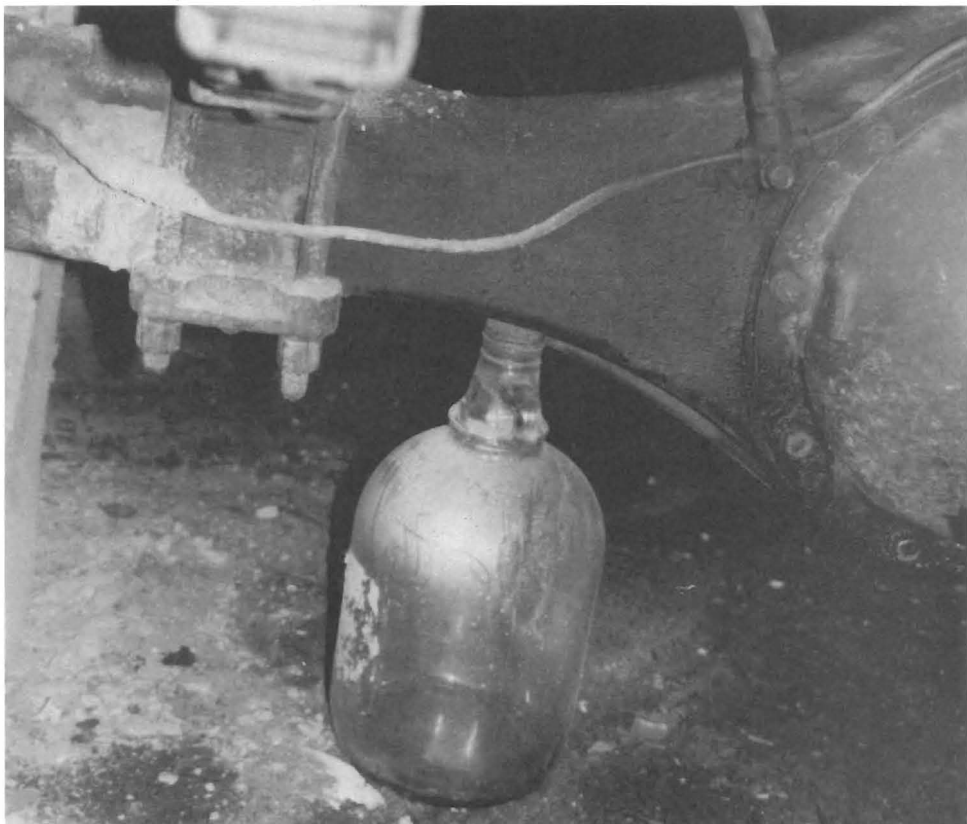
DAVID ZSIDO

An undated photo from the 1940s shows Fletcher Chapin, Lily Butterfield's nephew, at the wheel of the 1926 Studebaker roadster. The first Glen Garage is in the background. Note that the garage door has been closed in with clapboards.

Yaremchuk, and I spent the morning hours cutting the box elders and sumac trees, bucking any usable wood into firewood length, and stacking the brush. This cleared the way for a direct shot to the doors by Bob Giddings' Ford F-550, which was going to move the roadster.

Temperatures had moderated for the six days preceding the extraction, so the winter snow had begun to settle, melt off, and disappear. Nonetheless, the snow depth still ranged from six to eight inches, and to assure an easy access, much of the snow was shoveled away along the one hundred feet from US Route 7 to the garage door. The highlight of more than three days of planning, preparation and hard work, was the moment, when the Studebaker roadster stuck its nose out of the door of Glen Garage and saw daylight for the first time since 1947! With all four tires 'pancaked' and rigidly stiff, the old roadster wobbled its way up Bob's rollback on its way to a new home.

It would be a matter of a couple more days of cleaning and preparation before the Reo dump truck would be ready for a similar extraction. Since the truck had been placed on blocks and a large jack, its under-inflated or flat tires and tubes remained pliable. It was amazing that they did hold air when we re-inflated them. This

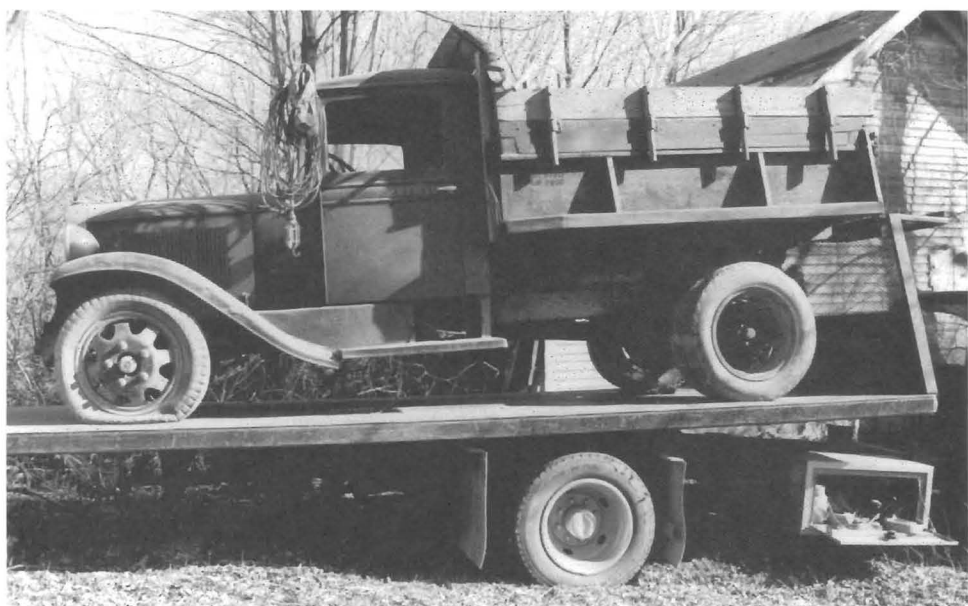


DAVID ZSIDO

Photo of a true bottle jack that was wedged under the truck for years.

assured a smoother move than what was experienced with the Studebaker. Several old glass gallon jugs had been stored under the truck. It was somewhat comical finding that one of these jugs happened to be directly under the truck's rear axle. Over the years as the truck settled into the wooden floor, this one particular jug became wedged under the axle and couldn't be moved. Actually, the glass bottom was pressed into the dry wood, and the axle had to be jacked up to relieve the pressure and free the jug. With all that pressure on it, the glass jug never broke. Now that's what I call a true bottle jack!

The delay in scheduling the Reo truck move also made sense in that, with a continuing spring thaw, we needed to give the ground some time to dry out and firm up. Actually more than three weeks passed before we scheduled the day when the Reo would be pulled from Glen Garage. Finally on 9 April 2005, Bob Giddings again returned to the Route 7 location in Rutland Town with his 1999 Ford F-550 rollback truck. By this time the ground was relatively dry and there wasn't any danger of getting stuck. With a gentle nudge of the winch on Bob's truck, the Reo dump truck, the former 'prime mover' of S.F. Butterfield Motor Express, was pulled back out of the garage, perhaps for the first time since 1949. It rolled past the small run-down building that was once the original Glen Garage. It quietly glided by the burned-out house, where Sidney and Lily had lived. It climbed onto the



DAVID ZSIZO

On 9 April 2005 the Ford 550's deck was leveled out and the 1931 Reo truck was nearly ready for its trip to Pittsford.

steel deck of the rollback, and once it was secured, the Ford F-550 with Sidney's 1931 Reo headed north on US Route 7 to its new home.

A curious find was discovered in the rafters of the first Glen Garage. Mounted at the highest point on the interior gable end was a pressure tank. The tank was wired against the interior wall and had a small pressure gauge attached to it. The tank was approximately eighteen inches in diameter and about sixty inches in length. It appeared that it may have been used to fill smaller acetylene tanks, which early vehicles in the teens and twenties would have required for head-lamps and tail-lights. When this sizeable tank was lowered to the main floor of the garage, and brought into the daylight, the shipping instructions from the manufacturer were still somewhat readable. They had been painted onto the black tank with silver paint. Although the manufacturer's name was not discernable, the following could be read:

From:	92 School St.	To: Glen Garage
	Boston, Ma.	Rutland, VT.

In addition, a small pocket-sized notebook was discovered in the cab of the Reo Truck. The notebook was somewhat of a testament to Sidney's organized nature. It contained a brief page on the selling price for delivered sand, stone, and loam.

Prices – per cu. Yard

Gravel	\$0.75 to \$1.25	Cinders	\$1.00
Sand	\$1.00 to \$1.25	Stone	\$1.00
Filling	\$0.40 to \$0.60	Rocks	
Crushed Stone		Top Dirt	\$1.00 to \$2.00

In addition, it also contained his log of nearby residents, and the type of automobile they owned. It appeared, based on the notations about vehicle ownership, that Sidney maintained a schedule of what type of automobile the resident might want to acquire as a future purchase. This would indicate that Sidney was also involved with automobile sales as well as his numerous other activities during the mid-1930s. The following is a brief summary of some of his automotive notations:

Dyer, H.E. – Mill Village – has 1929 Buick & an old 26-27 Chev. – Pres of Kill. Nat. Bank – not much money – ought to have a fairly descent (sic) sedan or coupe

Griggs, George – RFD 1 – Rut. Chittenden Rd. – Ford T Coupe
– might buy A or V-8 Pickup – money okay

Livak, Mike – RD 1 Rut – “Blueberry Hill” – has a Ford
pickup 1929-30 – Should have a new one

Sargent, Linus – Chittenden – has Ford 1932-33 – works at
CVPS Corp. Should have new car

Phillips, Ernyst – So. Chittenden – works CVPS Corp – has
1927-28 Buick sedan – close – has money enough, but doesn’t
like to spend it

Kellogg, Kenneth – RD 1 – Rutland – Pittsford Rd. –
Cheney Hill – has 1932 Ford A – works VT. Marble Co. –
should have a newer car

A few automotive registration forms, discovered amongst the piles of paperwork, suggest that Sidney or Ben had sold some vehicles during the mid-1930s. One document was dated 13 March 1936. From the transaction described on that particular form, Sidney sold a 1933 Dodge truck to Leo William Phair. There was also documentation of Sidney or Ben selling two other vehicles to Leo Phair as well. On 21 March 1936 Leo purchased a 1932 ‘Red E’ tractor. There was also the purchase of a 1933 Mack one-half ton truck. Apparently Sidney also kept a watchful eye on the activity of other area automobile dealers in the Rutland area. One flyer, which had been mailed to him during the late 1930s, was an announcement from W. C. Landon’s, the local Chevrolet and Oldsmobile dealer. The flyer noted that W.C. Landon was moving from Evelyn Street to “Cleveland Ave. opposite Central Vermont.” The mailer also noted that W. C. Landon’s had “been serving Vermont Motorists for over 35 years.” Of the forty used motor vehicles listed in the flyer, the least expensive was a 1929 Whippet 6 cyl. Sedan for \$25. The most expensive was a 1935 Chevrolet Master Coach for \$550. At this time W. C. Landon’s was “open evenings and Sundays all day.” Another curious non-automotive flyer, which Sidney received during this period, was a reward poster from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, DC. The poster was dated 2 March 1936, and sought information on William Dainard, a criminal who had more than twenty-five aliases. Dainard was wanted in connection with the kidnapping of nine year old George Weyerhaeuser in Tacoma, Washington.

Sidney was the Post Adjutant for Rutland Post 31, the American Legion, for a period of time during the 1930s, possibly into the 1940s. At this point in time, Post 31 was located at 14 Cottage Street in Rutland. During the 1935-36 term of office of Post 31 Commander P. Joseph Franzoni, an undated letter was sent to the previous sixteen Past Commanders of the Post, asking that they provide a brief biography of themselves. This letter was signed by Commander Franzoni and Sidney Butterfield as the Post Adjutant.

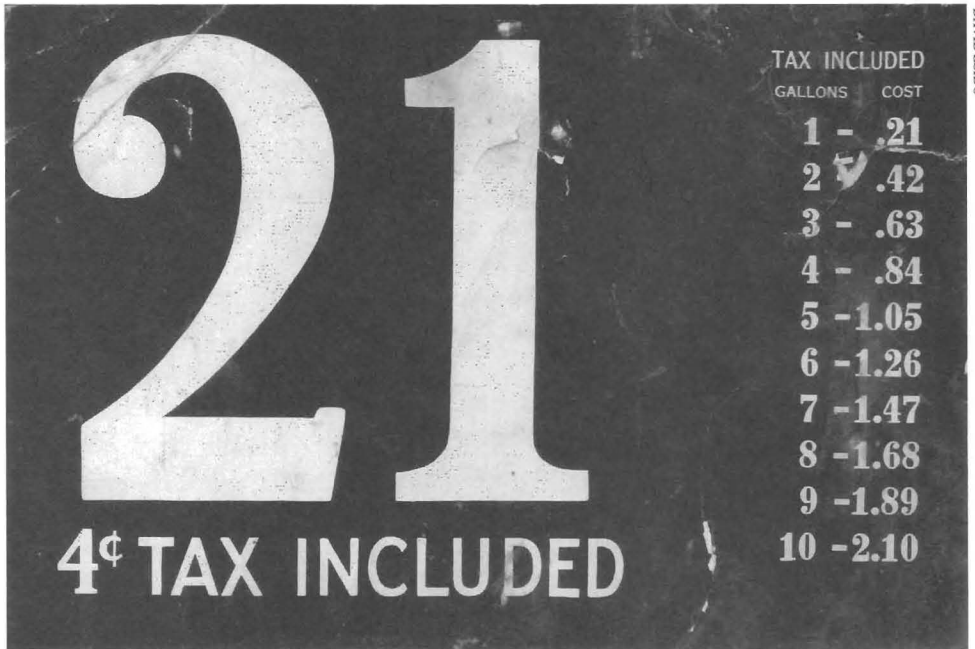
Another letter was also sent to the "Veterans of the World War" in the Rutland area, soliciting their membership. The tattered remains of this letter stated that annual dues of three dollars could be paid with "\$1 down, and the balance can be paid later." The letter was dated 25 February 1936, and was signed by Sidney as the Adjutant. He also kept an advertisement from the American Book Company, which promoted the sales of 'Mayhew Lake's American Band Books.' The material had been directed to the "Leader of Band, American Legion Post 31."

Previous Post 31 Adjutants had apparently entrusted him with the "Post Adjutant's Correspondence Files." These Adjutants included Jack Crowley, who served the Post approximately during the years 1920 to 1922. Then Freeman Plue became Adjutant during the years 1923 to 1924 before advancing to Post Commander. Fortunately, Sidney saved these extremely early correspondence files from Rutland Post 31, which subsequently have been acquired by the Rutland Historical Society. This correspondence revealed that Rutland Post 31 was an extremely active during the years following its formation. This included a wide range of activities from promoting a vaudeville show at the new National Guard armory with professional talent from Keith's Circuit to a strong stand against the Ku Klux Klan supported by a series of letters to the Vermont Congressional delegation.

Rutland Town resident, Paul Whittemore recalls working for Sidney during the summer of 1928. Paul was eleven at the time. His family had moved to the south end of Rutland on Chaplin Avenue the preceding November, after the Flood of 1927 forced them out of their house on Baxter Street. Paul operated the gasoline pumps for Sidney. He would pump the gasoline into a large holding globe on the top of the old fashion pump. Then he would draw it off and empty the fuel into the customer's fuel tank. Sidney had two fuel pumps located to the east of the building, between the garage and Route 7. As Paul remembers, Sidney was quite the mechanic, and there wasn't much that he couldn't repair.

According to copies of invoices, which were found in the Garage, Sidney purchased gasoline from two different sources in 1927: The

Texas Company (Texaco) and Standard Oil of New York. Purchases of gasoline from these sources ranged from one hundred gallons to three hundred gallons at a price of 22 cents per gallon. Paul would also deliver engine motor oil as well. Back in 1928 Glen Garage was thirty or forty feet further east of its current location. When U.S. Route 7 was eventually widened, the garage was moved to its present position, a



DAVID ZSIDO

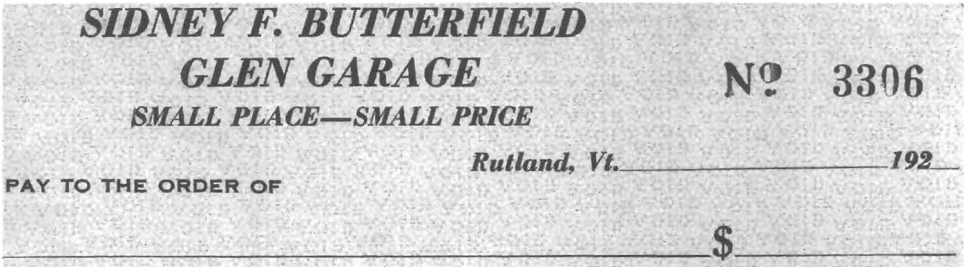
A gas price sign from the 1920s.

short distance to the west. At the end of the summer, Sidney paid Paul the sum of \$22, and Paul went to Sears & Roebuck and purchased a new bicycle.

While Paul couldn't remember too much about S.F. Butterfield Motor Express and Sidney's trucks, he did recall that during his short tenure at Glen Garage, Sidney used a 1927 Auburn coupe to deliver the U.S. Mail along a Star Route in the Town of Chittenden. He also remembered that Sidney had a nice two-door LaSalle coupe. Paul also surmised that a fellow named, Peavey Peake of Bristol 'borrowed' the radiator cap from the 1926 Studebaker roadster. In addition to the Chittenden mail route, Lloyd Davis of Rutland Town also recalled that Sidney had the contract to carry the U.S. Mail the short distance from the Rutland Railway Yard to the Rutland Post Office on West Street. During the summer of 1927 Sidney apparently purchased soft drinks and ice cream for resale, as invoices from Day's Bottling Works of Rutland were also discovered within the garage. The Day's Bottling letterhead boasted that Day's was the

manufacturer of Pico Club Beverages, was the bottler of Coca-Cola, and also sold Ward Crushes and Saratoga Vichy Water.

The character of the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and US Route 7 in Rutland now has changed forever. The property, consisting of the burned-out house, the old run-down garage, and the towering two-story barn, which sits on approximately two acres of land, is for sale. The future of the two different buildings called Glen Garage, where Sidney worked on vehicles during the 1920s and 1930s and from where he ran his contract U.S. Mail delivery and gravel trucking business and where he parked his Reo and Studebaker after their final days on the road, is uncertain. Sidney considered Glen Garage as a “Small Place – Small Price,” but over the years he certainly packed it full of treasures. However, my almost daily trip past this location is much different now that the secrets of Glen Garage have been released.



A piece from a Sidney Butterfield blank check.

Through the generosity of the Butterfield family certain artifacts from Glen Garage have been donated to the Rutland Historical Society and the Farm Museum at the Rutland Fair Grounds in memory of Sidney F. Butterfield. Jim Davidson retrieved a sizeable stack of letterheads, billheads, local publications and the like from the floor of the original garage. These were in reasonably good shape with some dating back to the early 1890s. Morris ‘Mo’ Tucker also acquired a wooden frame spike tooth harrow, an early horse-drawn piece of farm apparatus, as well as a wooden maul for the Farm Museum.



An undated photograph, probably taken during the early 1930s of Sidney and his mail truck.